

JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

#1: "Who Jesus Is"

SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-18

INTRO:

If you don't believe the first eighteen verses John wrote are true, there's no point to spending any time studying what else he wrote about Jesus. On the contrary, if you do believe what he wrote in the first eighteen verses, the rest of the gospel will take on a significance beyond which words can describe. I hope you have already joined me as a believer. If not, I hope you will.

First of all, John says that...

...JESUS IS THE ETERNAL WORD.

"In the beginning was the Word. . . He was in the beginning with God."

First of all, Jesus predates creation; He was in the beginning (whenever that was) with God. He existed with God before the universe was created. We know Jesus as the man who lived 33 years on this earth, but before He was Jesus, He was the Son of God. And He continued to be the Son of God after the man Jesus was crucified.

Second, He is the eternal Word of God; He is the "LOGOS." "LOGOS" is Greek for "word." Jesus is ***"the Word"*** in that He is ***"the expression of the mind and the thought and the purpose of God"*** (Butler, p. 21). This is an infinite truth that our finite minds struggle with.

Third, ***"in the beginning with God"*** indicates that He is equal with God and enjoys the most intimate relationship with God. His nature is God's nature. Hebrews 1:3 says, ***"He is...the exact imprint of his (God's) nature."***

Secondly, John says that...

...JESUS IS GOD.

He says, ***"the Word was God."*** In other words, Jesus is God. He is the second person of what we know as the Trinity, the Son of God the Father, but He is equal to God in every way. He said, ***"If you have seen me, you have seen the Father"*** (John 14:9). In saying this, Jesus was not saying that he *looked like* the Father. He was referring to his and the Father's equality, to their equal authority and to their most intimate relationship.

Thirdly, John says that...

...JESUS IS THE CREATOR.

“All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” The Greek translated ***“made”*** is a form of ***“GINOMAI,”*** which means ***“to bring into existence.”*** So, John is saying that everything that exists has been brought into existence by Jesus. None of it existed before He brought it into existence. In other words, He made something from nothing! And according to the Genesis account, He *spoke* the universe and everything in it into existence! He *spoke* Adam and Eve into existence.

Forgive me for telling this again, but I’m reminded of the story of the archeologist who came running out of a cave somewhere in Iraq yelling, ***“I’ve found Adam and Eve! I’ve found Adam and Eve!”*** One of his fellow archeologists asked, ***“How do you know for sure it’s Adam and Eve?”*** He said, ***“They don’t have any belly buttons.”***

Sorry about that...

Fourth, John says that...

...JESUS WAS ANNOUNCED BY JOHN THE BAPTIZER.

I have trouble saying, ***“John the Baptist.”*** He was a baptizer, but he wasn’t a ***“Baptist,”*** if you get my drift...

John was a ***“forerunner.”*** A ***“forerunner”*** was someone who ran ahead of expected guests to announce their arrival before they actually arrived. Christ had been born and had grown to manhood, but His identity had not been made known. John was assigned the task of revealing and affirming the identity of Jesus to the world.

Fifth, John says that...

...JESUS WAS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Verse 7 says that ***“He (John) came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.”*** You see, Jesus was the ***“offspring”*** of woman who, according to Genesis 3:15, would take Satan down and be the promised Messiah.

Man was condemned in his sin and unable to see his way through the darkness. Christ was ***“the light”*** that was needed. He was the light that leads all men back to God.

Sixth, John says that...

...JESUS WAS REJECTED BY THE JEWS.

Have you ever wondered why the Jews rejected Jesus? One writer says this:

“The Jews rejected Jesus because He failed, in their eyes, to do what they expected their Messiah to do—destroy evil and all their enemies and establish an eternal kingdom with Israel as the preeminent nation in the world. The prophecies in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 describe a suffering Messiah who would be persecuted and killed, but the Jews chose to focus instead on those prophecies that discuss His glorious victories, not His crucifixion.

“The commentaries in the Talmud, written before the onset of Christianity, clearly discuss the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 and puzzle over how these would be fulfilled with the glorious setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah. After the church used these prophecies to prove the claims of Christ, the Jews took the position that the prophecies did not refer to the Messiah, but to Israel or some other person.

“The Jews believed that the Messiah, the prophet which Moses spoke about, would come and deliver them from Roman bondage and set up a kingdom where they would be the rulers. Two of the disciples, James and John, even asked to sit at Jesus’ right and left in His kingdom when He came into His glory. The people of Jerusalem also thought He would deliver them. They shouted praises to God for the mighty works they had seen Jesus do and called out, “Hosanna, save us,” when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (Matthew 21:9). They treated Him like a conquering king. Then, when He allowed Himself to be arrested, tried, and crucified on a cursed cross, the people stopped believing that He was the promised prophet. They rejected their Messiah (Matthew 27:22).

“Note that Paul tells the church that the spiritual blindness of Israel is a ‘mystery’ that had not previously been revealed (Romans chapters 9–11). For thousands of years, Israel had been the one nation that looked to God while the Gentile nations generally rejected the light and chose to live in spiritual darkness. Israel and her inspired prophets revealed monotheism—one God who was personally interested in mankind’s destiny of heaven or hell, the path to salvation, the written Word with the Ten Commandments. Yet Israel rejected her prophesied Messiah, and the promises of the kingdom of heaven were postponed. A veil of spiritual blindness fell upon the eyes of the Jews, who previously were the most spiritually discerning people. As Paul explained, this hardening on the part of Israel led to the blessing of the Gentiles who would believe in Jesus and accept Him as Lord and Savior.

“Two thousand years after He came to the nation of Israel as their Messiah, Christ is still (for the most part) rejected by the Jews. Many Jews today (some say at least half of all living Jews) identify themselves as Jewish but prefer to remain “secular.” They identify with no particular Jewish movement

and have no understanding or affiliation with any Jewish biblical roots. The concept of Messiah as expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures or Judaism's '13 Principles of Faith' is foreign to most Jews today.

"But one concept is generally held as universal: Jews must have nothing to do with Jesus! Most Jews today perceive the last 2,000 years of historical Jewish persecution to be at the hands of so-called "Christians." From the Crusades to the Inquisition, to the pogroms (organized massacre of helpless people) in Europe, to Hitler's Holocaust—Jews ultimately believe that they are being held responsible for the death of Jesus Christ and are being persecuted for that reason. They, therefore, reject Him today.

"The good news is that many Jews are turning to Christ today. The God of Israel has always been faithful to keep a "remnant" of believing Jews to Himself. In the United States alone, some estimates say that there are over 100,000 Jewish believers in Jesus, and the numbers are growing all the time" (Got Questions Podcast).

Seventh, John says that...

...JESUS GAVE ALL BELIEVERS THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD.

Note verse 12: ***"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...*** You will note that it doesn't say that those who believe in his name become children of God. It says that those who believe in his name *are given the right* to become children of God.

You may think I'm being too picky or legalistic here, but I'm just going by what John says.

Peter gave the plan of salvation to believers on the day of Pentecost as ***"Repent and be baptized..."*** (Acts 2:38). In other words, when you believe in Jesus and receive him as the Son of God, you have the *right* to repent and be baptized.

Eighth, John says that...

...JESUS BECAME A MAN AND LIVED AMONG US.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (v. 12).

The Son of God entered this world just like we did – nine months in the womb and then birth. Only, it was a *virgin* birth. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; Joseph was not his biological father.

He grew as a young boy. He experienced puberty. He became a teenager. He grew to manhood. In his thirtieth year he was baptized by John

and started a ministry of teaching designed to teach people the principles of a coming kingdom called *the church*, to prepare people for the end of life as we know it, and to prepare believers for eternity.

Ninth, John says that...

...WHILE THE LAW WAS GIVEN THROUGH MOSES, GRACE AND TRUTH CAME THROUGH JESUS.

John wrote in verse 17: ***“For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”***

One author writes: *“Verse 17 explains an important difference between the ministries of Moses and Jesus. Moses’ ministry brought knowledge of the Law. But the Law could only show us how sinful and broken we were (Romans 3:20). Rather than just bringing us truth, Jesus also brought us grace. Instead of simply telling us that we were broken, which is what the Law did, Christ gave us a way to fix what was wrong. This is an important common theme of the Bible. Human efforts will always fall short, and everyone is corrupted with sin (Romans 3:23). Instead of leaving us to face that uncomfortable truth alone, Jesus provided a way for us to experience forgiveness. Merely doing good deeds can never save us. Only God’s grace, through faith, can do that”* (Bible Ref).

The Law revealed what was righteous and unrighteous; what was good and what was bad; what was right and what was wrong; what we should do and what we should not do; what was good for man and what was not good for man; what was pleasing to God and what was not pleasing to God. This was needed so that man would know his boundaries.

In the beginning, there was just one simple law: Don’t eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. That law was broken, and that led to all sorts of criminal and immoral behavior. So, the Law of Moses was given.

But the Law couldn’t save, it couldn’t produce the righteousness required, so, the righteousness of Christ was made available to all mankind through believing in Him as the Messiah, the Son of God, repenting of sins, and being baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

IN CLOSING...

Do you believe what John wrote? If you do, you can enjoy the assurance of eternal life with the Lord. If you don’t believe what John has written, then heaven can’t be yours. What do you say?